

**LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS COUNCIL
REPORT TO THE WISCONSIN SECRETARY
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
*July 1996-1998 Biennial Report***

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

June 20, 1998 marked the third anniversary of the Local Roads and Streets Council's first meeting. The year 1995 was predominantly spent identifying the significant local roads and streets issues to be addressed by the Council. In the spring of 1996, the Council's first report was sent to the Secretary, outlining the Council's proposals for addressing priority issues. The Department's concurrence with the Council's proposals has led to a non-stop effort, since that time, to acquire the resources necessary to develop specific implementation recommendations.

As the next biennium begins, the Council is poised to make detailed proposals for consideration in the 1999-2001 biennial budget process. Two high priority efforts are the Local Roads Database Redesign Project and the General Transportation Aids Study Committee.

A final report on the proposal for a redesigned Local Roads Database has been completed. A new Local Roads Database is seen by the Council as key to the management of the local roads system. With the implementation of the redesigned database, an opportunity will finally exist to gauge the quality of our local system and review the effectiveness of the funding and management of that system. This redesign effort has taken the commitment of considerable resources by the Department and hundreds of hours of time by local officials, but the result will be a state-of-the-art system that will serve both state and local government interests now and well into the future.

Analysis of the General Transportation Aids (GTA) program, one of the proposed projects from the initial round of Council recommendations, has concluded. Impetus has been added to this effort by the Legislative Audit Bureau's reports on GTA, completed as part of the last biennial budget process. These reports raised concerns about existing GTA structure and formula. The Council's GTA Study Committee has finalized its short-term recommendations and changes to this very important funding program for local roads and streets. The GTA Study Committee has also set forth a list of long-term recommendations the Committee will work on in the future.

In many ways the Council has just begun to reach its potential. The work completed to date is just the vanguard of the body of work yet to come. I trust that the Department will continue to see the benefit of the Council and the key role it can play in transportation policy. The Council presents a great opportunity for the Department to develop policies that can be fully embraced at the local level. Speaking for the local government council members, I believe that the effort to forge a true partnership between the Department and ourselves is being realized.

This report is both a synopsis of what the Council has done to date and an overview of what the Council is planning for the future. We hope this report will meet with as much acceptance as our first.

This report is respectfully submitted this 5th day of August, 1998.

by Council Chairman

Emmer W. Shields

LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Wisconsin Towns Association

- ♦ Stanley Anderson, McKinley-Polk
- ♦ Mildred Beier, Beaver Dam-Dodge
- ♦ Norm Faber, Ithaca-Richland
- ♦ La Verne Grunwald, Caledonia-Waupaca

League of Wisconsin Municipalities

- ♦ Richard Daniels, Marshfield
- ♦ Dan Mahoney, Plover
- ♦ Dennis Melvin, West Bend
- ♦ David Pelton, Mauston

Wisconsin Counties Association

- ♦ Emmer Shields, Chair, Ashland Co.
- ♦ Phil Boehning, Town of Sherman
- ♦ Tom Boguszewski, Rock Co.
- ♦ Dick Leffler, Florence Co.

Regional Planning Commissions & Metropolitan Planning Organizations

- ♦ Don Kush, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
- ♦ Larry Kirch, La Crosse MPO
- ♦ Walt Raith, East Central RPC
- ♦ Ken Yunker, Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Wisconsin Alliance of Cities

- ♦ Richard Jones, Racine
- ♦ Mariano Schifalacqua, Milwaukee
- ♦ Bud Verjinsky, Wisconsin Rapids
- ♦ To Be Appointed

WisDOT Staff

- ♦ Mary Forlenza, Chair
- ♦ Rod Clark
- ♦ Ruben Anthony, Jr.
- ♦ Mark Mansfield
- ♦ Maile Pa'alani
- ♦ Marcia Traska
- ♦ Bob Wagner

LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS COUNCIL OVERVIEW

Of the approximately 111,000 miles of streets, roads and highways in Wisconsin, county, town, village and city streets and roads make up 89% of that mileage. These local roadways serve as key components of a vital network providing for the movement of lower volumes of traffic throughout the state. The focus of the Local Roads and Streets Council is to provide for the continued existence of a high quality, cost effective local roads system that serves the needs of Wisconsin's citizens.

In 1995 the Council was created and charged by the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to concentrate on four main areas: (1) enhance and facilitate communication among various state associations and Wisconsin Department of Transportation; (2) look at the impact of federal legislation on state policies; (3) review policies which affect local roads and streets, with special emphasis on "cost containment"; and (4) evaluate needs and methods for collecting local network data and develop policy recommendations to the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Since that time, the Council has addressed these areas by reviewing local road and street financing policies, establishing better data collection systems, and identifying the most cost effective ways of furnishing local road and street services.

By virtue of its existence, the Council has provided a venue for improving intergovernmental cooperation on the local level by creating a structure within which the State, through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, can liaison with local government to create joint solutions to current transportation challenges. This report details the Council's recent activities.

LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS COUNCIL ORGANIZATION

The Local Roads and Streets Council is comprised of representatives from all levels of local government, including towns, villages, cities and counties; regional planning commissions; metropolitan planning organizations; as well as Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) staff. This cross-section of representation allows for input from a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives, which is an asset in developing policy and direction for the Council. However, the size of the Council can be a hindrance when approaching projects at a work-group level. Early on it was determined that four working Committees would be established to address particular issues. They are:

♦ **Education and Communication**

♦ **Mandates and Public Policy**

♦ **Cost Containment and Managing Resources**

♦ **Needs Study and Funding Mechanisms**

Each committee's membership attempts to reflect the same cross-section of the Council as a whole. Each committee has at least one member of each local government association on it. Quite often the committee membership expands beyond Council members, to include outside stakeholders or non-Council local government representatives with special skills or expertise that can contribute to the Committee's efforts.

For the foreseeable future, this Committee structure will continue. The remainder of this report will detail the work each committee has undertaken over the past biennium and what is proposed for the remainder of 1998.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

The Education and Communication Committee is charged with developing recommendations for communicating with all shareholders and decisionmakers having an interest in local transportation. It is also charged with making education recommendations. The work of this Committee is ongoing.

Much of 1996 and 1997 was spent monitoring the biennial transportation budget, as well as reviewing the Legislative Audit Bureau reports and the work of the Transportation Finance Study Committee. The Council as a whole offered its input to the Secretary and to state lawmakers on the proposed transportation budget. The Council also acted as a source of information for local governments, both directly and through the associations representing the Council's membership. Numerous presentations were given across the state to both local government and state government officials to communicate and educate them on the work of the Council.

The Education and Communication Committee currently has two priority projects, as well as its ongoing work. The two projects are:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Focus on Improvement of State/Local Relationship❖ Educational Outreach Improvements |
|--|

Improvement of State/Local Relationship

One of the prime objectives of the Council is to improve the relationship between state and local governments. TRANSLINKS 21 recognized the need to approach transportation on a holistic basis. The arbitrariness of jurisdictional responsibilities in the past has led to a lack of cooperation or coordination and a parochialism that has not served our transportation system well. Improvements to the State/Local, as well as Local/Local relationships are key to breaking down the barriers that now exist.

In 1998, the Council hopes to work with WisDOT's State/Local Outreach Committee being chaired by Rod Clark, Director of the Bureau of Transit and Local Roads (BTLR). This group has been charged in part with the responsibility of improving communication between WisDOT and local governments. The Council will serve as a resource by

providing input on the recommendations of the Outreach Committee or by assisting on the formulation of those recommendations.

One of the earlier recommendations made by the Council was the development of a countywide transportation meeting to be held semiannually or annually. This meeting was intended as a means of promoting cooperation between all levels of government and a possible forum for education of local officials. It is hoped that this proposal might be one that would receive further consideration by WisDOT's Outreach Committee.

Educational Outreach Improvements

During 1996, the Council went on record supporting the expansion of state funding for the University of Wisconsin's Transportation Information Center (UWEX-TIC). This recommendation was included in WisDOT's initial budget request, but was not included in subsequent budget proposals. Given the tumultuous nature of the last budget process, the proposal became a low priority and failed to be included in the final budget.

The Council regards the Transportation Information Center (TIC) as the primary source for training of local government officials in the area of local roads and streets. The loss of the Center would be extremely detrimental to the management of our local roads and streets system. It is critical that existing funding levels be maintained.

The Council will be making a recommendation in 1998 for greater state funding of the Center through the state transportation budget. This support will hopefully be used for enhancing the Center's activities on the local level, but if federal funds are reduced, it will be used to maintain current programs. The Council believes that a great need for education and training exists on the local level. While the classes, seminars and printed materials the Center provides are critical to improving the overall management of local roads and streets, an even more proactive approach must be taken to improve them beyond the level we have reached. This approach must include field personnel who can meet with local officials on a one-on-one basis. These personnel cannot be provided without additional state funding.

MANDATES AND PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The goal of the Mandates and Public Policy Committee is to study the issue of mandates and public policy as they affect local roads and streets. One of the primary concerns of local government is the escalation of both project delivery costs and project costs, due to mandates and public policies.

In 1996 the Committee performed a survey to determine what local governments cited as the most problematic mandates. They are as follows:

- ◆ Wetland Preservation, including mitigation policies
- ◆ Hazardous Materials Identification and Removal
- ◆ Property Acquisition and Relocation Rules
- ◆ Historical/Archeological Surveys and related requirements

The Committee also identified a streamlining of the project delivery process as a high priority.

In 1998, the Committee has the following two priorities:

- ❖ Exploration of increased flexibility in project delivery requirements with the WISDOT and FHWA.
- ❖ Addressing the four most recognized mandate problems (listed above) with the appropriate agencies.

Project Delivery

The Council and Committee will begin to examine the facilities development process with representatives from both the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. A working group will be formed to determine if local roads and streets projects can take a more streamlined delivery approach. At a minimum, the following issues will be addressed:

- ◆ Review of the requirements presently in place for determining the project delivery process and the basis for those requirements
- ◆ Review of what tasks exist in the delivery process with delineation of what tasks are for engineering purposes and what tasks are non-engineering, administrative or mandate compliance tasks
- ◆ Possible alternate delivery processes for local projects

Representatives of the agencies overseeing or enforcing the mandates will be invited to future meetings. Problems and costs associated with the mandates will be examined. The mandate intent and legislative requirements will be reviewed in relation to the current process. Determinations will be made on whether the mandate has expanded passed its original legislative intent or requirements and whether opportunities exist to reform the process with a return to a more fundamental and basic approach. If the mandate is in fact in line with its original legislative intent or requirements, the effort will be devoted to appraising improvements to the current process, that will lead to cost savings and reduced delivery time.

The Council hopes to have substantive recommendations on both local project delivery process streamlining and mandates reform by the end of 1998.

COST CONTAINMENT AND MANAGING RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The goal of the Cost Containment and Managing Resources Committee is to give specific recommendations in the area of transportation services, cost containment, and managing existing resources. Containing costs and improving management of the local roads and streets system have long been concerns of both state and local government officials. Cost containment can be achieved in numerous ways. A simple way is to reduce service to the public or cease investing in local roads and streets infrastructure. The Council rejects these methods for obvious reasons. The goal of containing costs must include an implicit goal of improving or at least maintaining the quality of the local highway system.

The costs of maintaining the local highway system are driven by many factors. Clearly the projects undertaken by other Council committees have a bearing on costs and the management of local roads and streets. Improved management of the system derived from education of local officials can contain costs and improve the quality of the system (Education and Communication Committee). Addressing mandate costs and process costs could clearly contain costs (Public Policy and Mandates Committee).

There are also factors outside the control of the public sector. The private sector is an important but often overlooked player in containing costs. Since most municipalities are not equipped to construct or improve local roads and streets, the road construction industry plays a major role in improving local infrastructure. Recognizing this, the Local Roads and Streets Council met with representatives of the Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association in 1997 to discuss ways in which the public sector could approach contracting to improve cost savings. Several recommendations were developed from these discussions. They include:

- ◆ Standardizing specifications for local government projects
- ◆ Grouping or bundling projects to take advantage of scale
- ◆ Timing of bids to improve competitiveness and contractor scheduling

The standardization of specifications and bid documents has been addressed by the UWEX Transportation Information Center's educational programs. The latter two recommendations were included as informational items in the Local Roads Improvement Program materials distributed for the biennial program.

As stated earlier, much of 1996 and 1997 was devoted to reviewing materials and reports being generated as part of the biennial budget process. Throughout the budget process, there was a clear concern by many in state government over cost containment in the area of local roads funding. Nowhere was the concern greater than in the area of General Transportation Aids (GTA). Since GTA has a cost-based funding formula and costs have, for the most part, increased at a rate greater than inflation, the funding formula itself is seen by some as contributing to a lack of cost restraint on the local level.

While numerous proposals were presented to address the GTA formula, in the end none were adopted and the formula basically has remained unchanged. The problems associated with GTA, whether they are in fact perception problems or real structural problems, continue to exist. The Council recognizes the need for improvement of the GTA formula and structure and has assigned the Cost Containment and Managing Resources Committee to work on the project.

For 1998, the Cost Containment and Managing Resources Committee has the following three priorities:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ General Transportation Aids Analysis❖ Best Management Practices Development❖ A Public/Private Partnership Effort |
|--|

General Transportation Aids Analysis

The GTA analysis effort was initiated on January 21, 1998 when the first meeting of the group assigned to the project was held. Tom Boguszewski, Rock County Highway Commissioner and immediate past president of the Wisconsin County Highway Association, is chair of the GTA Study Committee. In addition to the Council representatives present, other stakeholders were invited to the first brainstorming session, including the heads of all local government associations; other state departments, including the Legislative Audit Bureau; and private sector representatives, including Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce and the Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association. As part of this initial meeting, the group was given a charge by the Local Roads and Streets Council Chairman. (Exhibit 1, Appendix A)

To summarize the charge to the group the following priorities must be addressed:

- ◆ Changes to the GTA formula and structure must be made to improve accountability. This is necessary to eliminate perceptions on the state level that local governments are not spending the funds appropriately or for their intended purpose.
- ◆ The list of eligible cost items needs to be reviewed. Particular attention must be given to whether the costs are truly a “transportation” related cost. An effort should also be made to see if all cost items should be treated equally or whether some items should be weighted more heavily or possibly capped.
- ◆ Specifically address police cost and special assessment issues, which were identified as being areas of the formula that may create inequities or are counter to GTA goals.

The charge also went on to outline items that are not to be addressed, including the relative share of the transportation budget GTA represents and the division of GTA between levels of government.

The group’s first session showed that both long- and short-term goals should be pursued. The initial charge of the Committee has been addressed. These short-term goals are delineated in the Chair’s charge to the group. The long-term goals included developing incentives within the formula for achieving system management goals, and developing needs studies or historical studies that gauge the effectiveness of the formula itself. The long-term goals will be addressed in following years and may have to wait until the implementation of the new Local Roads Database, which will provide the necessary information to make the long-term goals possible.

The GTA Study Committee made its report to LRSC on June 3, 1998. A brief summary of its short-term recommendations follows (the Committee’s full report is attached as Exhibit 1):

- ◆ Amend the allowable police cost percentages by reducing eligible police costs, minimizing GTA reallocations and simplifying the number of police costs categories
- ◆ Change the minimum municipal cushion from 5% to 2%, providing for payment reductions and assisting municipalities in minimizing or eliminating large fluctuations in payment
- ◆ Create separate municipal pots for rate-per-mile and share-of-costs
- ◆ Statutorily add a purpose statement to define the goals of the program and to determine if the stated goals are met

- ◆ Continue to contribute funding for the UW-TIC operations from sources other than GTA

Best Management Practices Development

The development of a Best Management Practices Guide for local transportation officials is a priority for 1998. This priority was established after interest by the Legislative Council was expressed. Since the Local Roads and Streets Council has no available staffing for this project, the involvement of the Legislative Council or another organization, such as the University of Wisconsin Transportation Information Center, would be necessary to undertake the project. At this time, no commitment has been made by anyone outside the LRSC, so a schedule cannot be set.

Public/Private Partnership Effort

The Public/Private partnership effort will continue in 1998. The Council once again will be inviting representatives of the Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association to discuss the undertaking of local roads and streets projects and how to better manage those projects, as well as ways costs can be contained.

NEEDS STUDY AND FUNDING MECHANISMS COMMITTEE

As the name implies, the Needs Study and Funding Mechanisms Committee has the goal of developing a needs assessment for our local roads and streets system and examining the funding in place for that system. It has been recognized by the Committee from the outset, that no local roads needs study could be done without additional information beyond that being provided by the current local roads database. It was also clear that any study of funding mechanisms should include investigation of the effectiveness of that funding. Without a gauge of quality and an historical perspective, there is no way to determine if a funding mechanism is truly performing its intended function. A database including quality measurements of the local roads and streets inventory was a prerequisite for any thorough examination of the local transportation system.

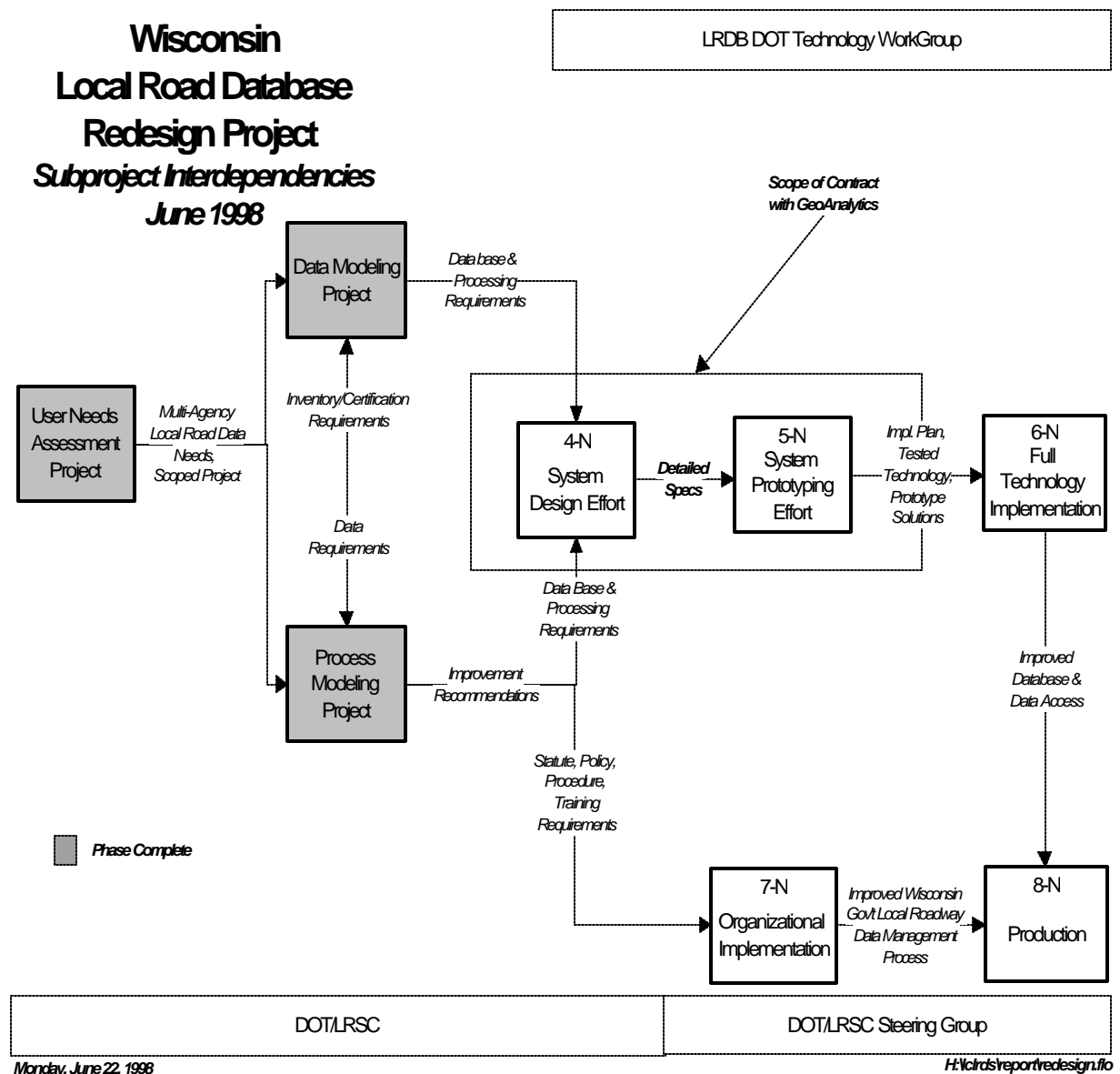
Local Roads Database Initiative

Since 1995, the Council and the Needs Study and Funding Mechanisms Committee has worked to develop the framework and the concepts for a new local roads and streets database. It became clear after an examination of the current database structure and technology that a new database would have to be developed, since the current database's 20-year technology and inherent limitations could not be retooled to meet the Council's conceptual goals.

The new database design will incorporate the goals and needs of both local and state government. The new database will not only expand the information being collected but will include entirely new methods of collecting data, accessing data, managing data and maintaining data quality. The new database will take full advantage of existing technology, while leaving the door open for evolving technology. While the existing

database has been little more than a system that counts or inventories local roads, the new database will be a management tool for both local and state governments. Rather than a Wisconsin Department of Transportation Local Roads Database, we will have a "Local Roads Database", in which both local and state government officials have ownership. In short, the new database will be a true Local/State partnership.

Where We Are



Fundamental Changes

AS-IS		WILL-BE
<i>DOT, Feds, Customers</i>	➔	<i>Locals, DOT, Feds</i>
<i>Inventory/Certification</i>	➔	<i>Local Rdwy Data Mgmt</i>
<i>DOT Owner</i>	➔	<i>DOT Custodian</i>
<i>DOT Responsibility</i>	➔	<i>WI Govt Responsibility</i>
<i>Data Collection</i>	➔	<i>Quality Assurance, Data Access, Mapping</i>
<i>Multiple, Disparate Systems</i>	➔	<i>One Integrated System</i>

Ruben Anthony of WisDOT chairs the database redesign project. To accurately define and assess the needs of local and state entities for this project, a Comprehensive Needs Study was undertaken. The results of this study, identifying and focusing on the business functions the database needs to support, provided the foundation for the Conceptual Model. This effort was completed in September 1997.

The next concurrent phases of the project were the data and process modeling efforts.

The Data Modeling Group was charged with developing the data items to be included in the new database, diagram data relationships and model the database's core business needs. This group has completed its task and has developed a list of data items with definitions.

The Process Modeling Group was charged with developing the processes necessary for maintaining the database. In order to do this, it was first necessary to examine the existing processes associated with local roads data acquisition and management. Exhibit 2 illustrates the current routing for local roads data.

The next step in the development of a new process model was the establishment of a set of process performance indicators, or improvement objectives. These objectives would be used to identify where problems exist and to measure whether proposed solutions would result in improvements. The Process Modeling Group developed a full breakdown of performance indicators. Improvement objectives include:

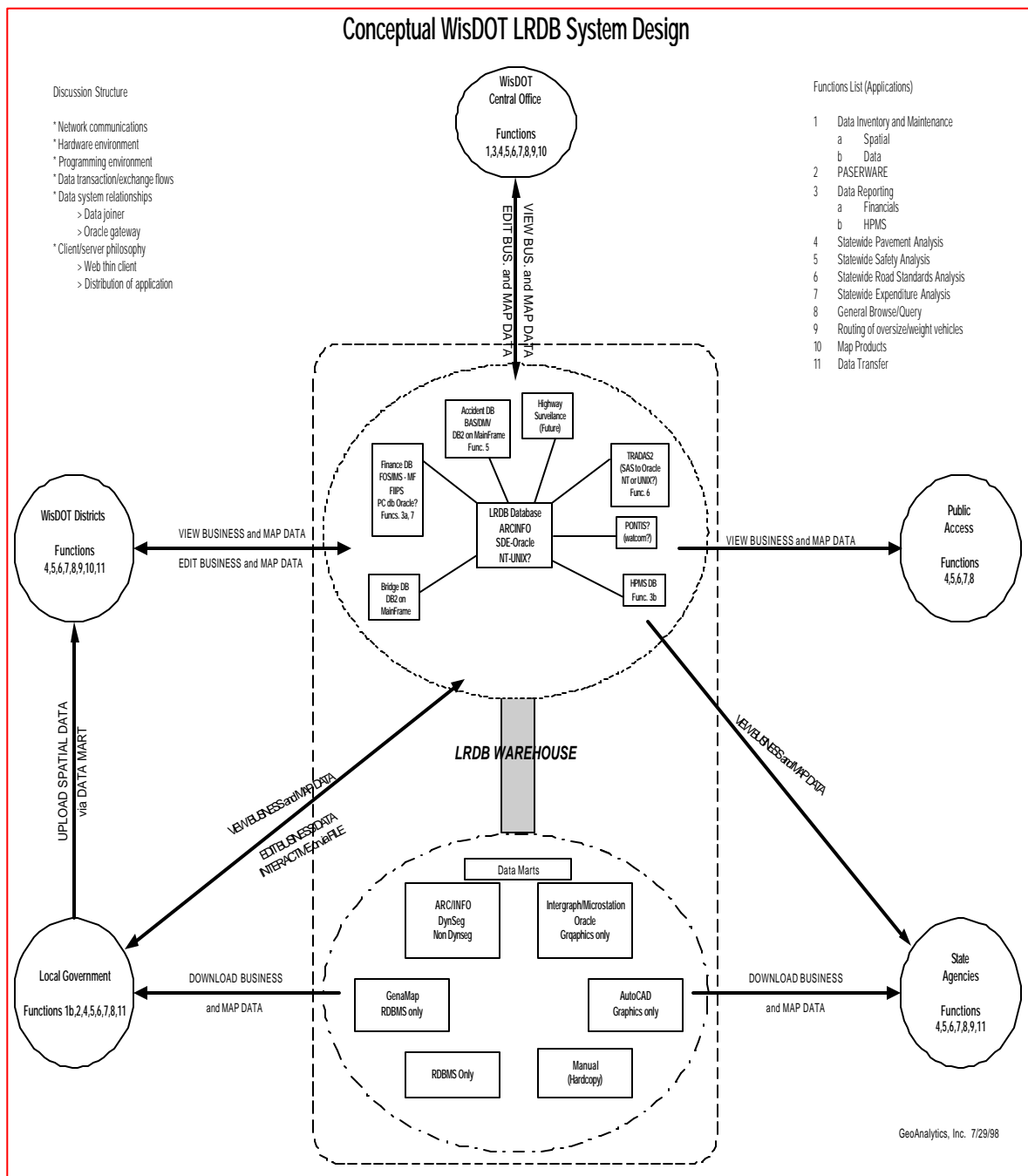
- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ◆ Local Governments Key | ◆ Effective Use of Staff |
| ◆ Data Users | ◆ Efficient Processes |
| ◆ Data Quality (Currency) | ◆ Clear Roles and Responsibilities |
| ◆ Data Access | ◆ One Process |

The Process Modeling Group's recommendations include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| ◆ Expanded Purpose of Database | ◆ Segmentation on Needs |
| ◆ Oversight Committee | ◆ New Data in Database |
| ◆ Performance Measures | ◆ Data Integration with Maps |
| ◆ Annual Certification Cycle | ◆ Multiple Methods to Share Data |
| ◆ Integration with Stakeholders | ◆ Begin Outstanding Improvement Projects |
| ◆ Shared Data Responsibilities | ◆ Flexible Database |
| ◆ Focused Field Verification | ◆ Improved Process Instructions |
| ◆ Reduced Map Duplication | |

It is clear from the work done to date that the new process will involve a major change in collecting and managing data and the technology utilized. Roles and responsibilities will also change dramatically, with local government playing a much larger part in all aspects of the process. A final report detailing the group's recommendations has since been issued. The Executive Summary of that report is attached as Exhibit 3.

The next stage of the database redesign initiative is in full swing with the formation of the Technology/Physical Modeling Group. This group is focusing its efforts on four areas: (1) analyzing and modeling systems requirements, (2) designing and (3) prototyping the system and (4) developing a system implementation plan. The first focus area, analysis and modeling, will address functional, data and technology requirements. The second area, designing the system, is displayed on the following chart:



The third component, system prototyping, will focus on selecting pilot areas, testing data acquisition methods, and testing database network structures and access methods. The fourth element, developing a system implementation plan, will take into consideration the results of the prototyping phase, evaluating each element to ensure the system is meeting functional requirements, database construction and migration of data from the old systems to the redesigned database, technology deployment, and system support and staff training.

In order to accomplish the Council's objectives, local responsibility needs to be addressed. Specifically, local governments will need to rate their roads. PASER is one method to conduct this rating. Additionally, local governments will still need to submit the data currently being submitted although the timeline and method of submittal may change. Counties, too, will need to determine their roles in this initiative. Many county resources such as land information offices are well situated to provide their municipalities with the necessary expertise in transitioning to the new system.

Many entities have inquired about this ambitious initiative and others have expressed a desire to get involved. Although the proposed schedule includes having the redesigned database be ready to accept inventory and certification information for the Year 2000 certification cycle, full implementation has not yet been scheduled. WisDOT has funded the "preliminary engineering" of the system, but funding for full roll out has not yet been identified.

The work of the Council will not end with submission of the report or even the implementation of a new database. One of the recommendations that will be forthcoming is that a local roads database advisory group should be formed to monitor the database and to make ongoing recommendations. The Council will also play a role in the efforts to implement the new database, including training and educational programs for local government officials.

CONCLUSION

This report has highlighted key issues which the Local Roads and Streets Council has addressed during the past two years. The Council recognizes more work is yet to be done. The strong relationship that exists between the Council and WisDOT will continue to facilitate this important work and generate solutions to future challenges. The Council looks forward to many more years of partnering with local governments and to many more successes in maintaining Wisconsin's local roads network as one of the finest in the nation.

Copies of this report are available by contacting:

Bureau of Transit and Local Roads
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
4802 Sheboygan Avenue
P.O. Box 7913
Madison, WI 53707-7913
Phone: (608) 267-7350

x:btlr/lrsc/fnlrptbw